

Scene Tracing: The Replication and Transformation of Global Industry, Movements, and Genres in Local Game Production

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ABSTRACT The notion of scenes has helped frame how particular clusters of cultural activities, practices, and "happenings" simultaneously replicate and transform global practices in specific localities. The study of scenes has aided us in examinations of how geographic and virtual localities create and shape global industries, movements, and genres. In this article, I focus on the Toronto game production scene to examine how it replicates and transforms the wider cultural norms, working conditions, and genre productions of the global game industry. Based on a two-year ethnography of the scene, I survey how gamemakers maintain and challenge the expected norms and practices of industry and platforms in the production of local games. To identify these clusters of cultural activity, I develop the notion of scenes as palimpsests to trace how gamemakers replicate and transform industry cultural norms and practices in the local scene. The last decade has seen the emergence of social media platforms as a venue for participants of scenes to discuss, create, and disseminate their works with geographically local and global audiences. The textual spaces of these platforms connect participants of local production scenes to a global community defined by geography, industry, and genre. By tracing scenes through its inscriptions, I examine how these platforms are centers for encounters between the values and practices of the Toronto game production scene and the wider industry. This article is about how the geographical cultural activities of scenes are shifting into virtual environments, and how these virtual spaces are transforming the cultural norms and practices of gamemaking and its associated activities, such as socials, game jams, and "talking shop." I argue that analyses of globalization must consider the wider physical and virtual infrastructures of local production to understand how cultural media are produced and circulated around the globe.

KEYWORDS making, ethnography, video games, production, scenes, local, Toronto

In cultural studies, the notion of scenes has been broadly deployed to connect the spatiality of geography with the temporality of cultural activities and artifacts to understand the role of place in the cultural production of media. Some of the early work of Will Straw, Holly Kruse, and Barry Shanks focused on the emergence of music scenes in urban environments to demonstrate how local genres and practices link to national and global forms of popular music.¹ Much of the work on the cultural production of literature, music, and games has applied the notion of scenes to investigate the importance of place in the wider development of globalized media.² In this sense, the notion of scenes has helped frame how particular clusters of cultural activities, practices, and “happenings” simultaneously replicate and transform global practices in specific localities.³ Simply put, the study of scenes has helped us examine how geographic and virtual localities create and shape global industries, movements, and genres.

In this article, I focus specifically on the Toronto game production scene to examine how it replicates and transforms the wider cultural norms, working conditions, and production genres of the global game industry. The Toronto game production scene, henceforth referred to as “the scene,” has numerous physical and virtual spaces for gamemakers to engage in local game production, including game jams, festivals, socials, exhibitions, workshops, talks, and conferences. Many of these spaces are controlled by arts-based organizations, post-secondary institutions, public libraries, game companies, and social media platforms which have their own cultural norms and practices of game production. Gamemakers make do with these organizations and platforms to coordinate activities, share expertise, and create a place for members of the scene to discuss their craft regardless of their geographic or virtual location.⁴ Based on a two-year ethnography of the scene and its communities, I survey how these gamemakers maintain and challenge the expected norms and practices of these organizations and platforms in the production of local games in a global industry.⁵

To identify these clusters of cultural activities, practices, and happenings, I develop the notion of scenes as palimpsests to trace how gamemakers replicate and transform the cultural norms and practices of the global game industry in the local scene. Will Straw’s notion of cultural scenes was essential to identify the locations (e.g., Toronto’s Queen Street West), genres of cultural production (e.g., Unity-made games), and social activities (e.g., game jams and socials) of the scene.⁶ However, it was by using Gérard Genette’s concept of palimpsest that I was able to trace the inscriptions of how gamemakers replicate and transform game industry norms and practices in the scene.⁷ Inscription can refer to textual and other forms of semiotic transmission and dissemination, such as making games with digital tools, sharing images and documents on community forums, and conversing through social media platforms.

The last decade has seen the emergence of social media platforms as a venue for participants of scenes to discuss, create, and disseminate their works with geographically local and global audiences. The textual spaces of these platforms connect participants of local production scenes to a global community of scenes defined by geography, industry, and genre. By tracing scenes through its inscriptions, I examine how these platforms are centers for encounters between the values and practices of the Toronto game production scene and the wider video game industry. That is, I reveal how the physical and virtual infrastructures of scenes are used by gamemakers to make local games in a global industry.

To demonstrate the inscriptions of the scene and the game industry, I trace and examine specific examples: the Torontaru monthly social event where gamemakers gather over drinks, the TOJam annual game jam where gamemakers build a game in less than seventy-two hours, and the monthly Toronto Unity Developers meetup where gamemakers network and discuss their craft of developing the genre of Unity-made games. In these examples, I investigate how gamemakers and organizations use social media platforms to concurrently engage the local scene with the wider movements, practices, and genres of the global game industry. To analyze these examples, I again use Will Straw's notion of scenes, but utilize his more recent ruminations on how scenes can be probed as collectivities, spaces of assembly, workplaces, ethical worlds, spaces of traversal, and as spaces of mediation.⁸ In doing so, I contribute to wider conversations on the importance of the local in engaging with wider industry formations and transforming modes of cultural production.

The data discussed draws from interviews and field notes documenting the scene's ephemerality and the recorded inscriptions of scene members on social media platforms. I draw upon forty-one in-depth interviews with nine participants and over four hundred hours of participant observations recorded as field notes from 2014 to 2016 as part of a larger ethnographic study of game workers and the game production scene in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada. Canada is in the global top five in terms of employment numbers in the game industry, with Toronto the home to dozens of independent and triple-A studios developing games for mobile and console platforms.⁹ Within Toronto there is a vibrant community of gamemakers who participate in game jams, meetups, and socials, which make the scene an ideal place to learn, network, and make games for the global industry.

I interviewed nine gamemakers three to five times over two years to follow their careers and understand how they use industry tools and resources to create their games during different stages of the gamemaking process.¹⁰ I participated in seventy-one activities at speaker and microtalk events, workshops, online and in-person discussion groups for gamemakers, social gatherings, game jams, and collaborative coworking spaces. This

fieldwork is contextualized by a critical discourse analysis of a gamemaker ecosystem of editors, tools, and resources.

It is only through tracing these inscriptions that the hidden involvement of scenes in the development of infrastructures in the city, the global game industry, and shared local places of gamemaking becomes visible. This article is about how the geographical cultural activities of scenes are shifting into virtual environments, and how these virtual spaces are transforming the cultural norms and practices of gamemaking and its associated activities, such as socials, "talking shop," and professional networking. I argue that analyses of globalization must take into consideration the wider physical and virtual infrastructures of local production to understand how cultural media are produced and circulated around the globe.

Tracing the Inscriptions of the Game Production Scene

Daniel Joseph argues the game industry is "the canary in the coal mine" of capitalism in how the formations of game production tells us about the industry's dangers and the new forms of resistance emerging in response.¹¹ Many of the technological infrastructures (e.g., handheld devices), business models of accumulating capital (e.g., free-to-play games or free-to-download mobile apps), and the governance structures of managing communities (e.g., end-user license agreements and non-disclosure agreements) emerged from the formalized publishers and platforms of the game industry, which sought to control the flow of capital from the workers who produce the games to the consumers who play the games.¹² Since the emergence of game studies as a critical interdisciplinary field of scholarship in the early 2000s, the field of game production studies has provided insightful analyses into understanding how games are produced, distributed, and consumed.

Stephen Kline, Nick Dyer-Witheford, and Greig de Peuter's field-defining work *Digital Play* developed the three circuits model of marketing, technology, and culture to examine the production, commodification, and consumption of games as interactive objects that are part of the "perpetual innovation economy."¹³ As they note, "the relatively short-lived play value of software and the successive waves of hardware innovation in the technology circuit create an incessant upgrade dynamic of new commodity releases. The launch of each new game and console burns up financial, symbolic, and creative capital by the gallon as promotional innovation and consumer resistance pursue each other in a rocketing upward spiral."¹⁴ In short, the reliance on contingent technologies means business models and governance structures are "perpetually innovated," which ripples across the game industry sector to limit how gamemakers produce and players interact with games. These

ripples have led to perpetual overwork and “crunch” of gamemakers, poor working conditions and frequent layoffs, and a hyper-white and masculinized industry that subjects its female and minoritized members to harassment from both within and outside the industry from male colleagues and players alike.¹⁵

Much of the game production scholarship examining these ripples focus on four thematic areas: the below-the-line labor of game testers and community managers, and the gendered work of game promotion; the creative game development of industry developers and “indie” or independent solo gamemakers; player-production of modders that modify commercial games and the metaplayers of community resources like walkthroughs; and game labor politics with a close look at autonomous game production, coworking spaces and women-run incubators, and the possible organization and unionization of pan-industry game workers.¹⁶ These areas not only underline the geographic, industrial, and cultural sites of game production and its relationship to wider formations of global game production, but also the variety of gamemakers contributing to the development and dissemination of games worldwide. The thread that ties these gamemakers together across work and leisure sites is they all use the same tools, products, and services to build their games, and discuss their craft at venues widely dubbed as part of the scene.

Throughout my ethnography, these gamemakers referred to their local game production community in Toronto as the “game dev scene” or, simply, the “dev scene.” These gamemakers were referring to professionalized game developers and their participation in the scene. Their interpretation of gamemaking was highly professionalized, which captured gamemakers from the mainstream developers working for Ubisoft Toronto to students at George Brown College (GBC) to the indies working at Bento Miso Collaborative Studio (now Gamma Space) and the hobbyists participating at the annual TOJam game jam. Even though these developers were not necessarily developers in the professionalized sense of the term, they were nonetheless captured in participants’ perceptions of what it meant to participate and be a member of the scene.

I use Straw’s notion of cultural scene as my theoretical framework to capture the range of geographic and virtual places in which gamemakers develop their games. According to Straw, “scene designates particular clusters of social and cultural activity without specifying the nature of the boundaries which circumscribe them.”¹⁷ A cultural scene “invites us to map the territory of the city in new ways while, at the same time, designating certain kinds of activity whose relationship to territory is not easily asserted.”¹⁸ Scenes are important centers of cultural activity that allow us to trace a range of local norms and practices, such as gamemaking organizations, social media spaces, and online forums.

Defining the boundaries of a scene can be problematic when the framework behind what constitutes a cultural scene is elusive. Straw suggests that cultural scenes “take shape,

much of the time, on the edges of cultural institutions which can only partially absorb and channel clusters of expressive energy which form within urban life."¹⁹ In my fieldwork, institutions ranged from university clubs and programs, to not-for-profit organizations, to online forums surrounding a specific developer tool. Straw further suggests "scenes may be ways of 'processing' the abundance of artifacts and spaces which sediment within cities over time."²⁰

Identifying which artifacts and places are relevant is critical to understand gamemaking and the boundaries of the scene. What constitutes a unit of analysis can be contextually bound moments in space and time. Participation in a social activity, such as a game jam, could be pivotal in the development of a gamemaker's social network and their perceptions of what are considered acceptable working conditions. Working at a game studio located in Toronto could place a gamemaker amongst a group of experienced developers with established industry practices and norms. Developing a game using the Unity Editor as a genre of production could direct a gamemaker towards certain tools and resources, or even set them on a career path working for a studio that uses Unity. I paid close attention to the artifacts and places embedded within the locations, social activities, and genres of production, which surround each stage of a gamemaker's game and career development.

Following the activity of gamemaking took me to virtual places beyond geographic locations. Sara Grimes, Brendan Keogh, and Holly Kruse have examined online gaming scenes, independent game production scenes, and music scenes, respectively, which has been vital in tracing how creators are exposed to a range of places that are simultaneously geographic and virtual, local and global.²¹ This meant I also considered the textual-based, virtual places of scenes, not just the ephemeral social activities and happenings across the urban landscape. I expanded the scope of what it meant to participate, identify, and engage with the scene, regardless of the medium in which the activity took place. With the prevalence of social media platforms, the everyday activities of scenes increasingly transform into formalized inscriptions for anyone online to access.

In *Palimpsests*, Genette examines the relationships between literary texts and how they were reread and rewritten over time. All *hypertexts*, the texts under examination, can be traced to *hypotexts*, earlier texts, which represent transtextual relationships that bridge previous works to contemporary ones. These transtextual relationships are transformations, a kind of bricolage, where authors create their works based-upon the hypotexts that come before them. These forms of transtextuality are what Genette referred to as hypertextuality or palimpsests: a surface that has been written upon several times, often with remnants of the erased inscriptions still visible. In cultural studies, this process is widely referred to as a form of remix culture, which can be found in grassroots movements that produce zines, mixtapes, and video game mods.²²

With the rise of social media, scenes increasingly become palimpsests, where members and organizations inscribe their norms and practices across the virtual platforms of the internet. When tethered to virtual spaces, scenes reveal the scrapings and inscriptions of these stakeholders struggling to assert their authority upon the surface of the scene.²³ These organizations include mainstream establishments, local organizations, and grassroots movements, which appropriate and resist one another's physical and social infrastructures. These infrastructures range from physical and geographic locations to digital systems and architectures, which place the surface of the scene across disparate ecologies of shared activities.

Kate Eichhorn in her study of the New York art scene of the 1970s examined the use of Xerox machines to trace how scenes spill over and migrate beyond geographic proximities.²⁴ Xerox machines were used to photocopy posters and zines to promote artists work and events connecting members of the New York scene to adjacent neighborhoods and artist groups around the globe. Eichhorn argued, scenes "may originate in the local but are often taken up around the world. Likewise global scenes frequently take on a local specificity . . . scenes get inscribed in local geographies and re-inscribed in global ones."²⁵ Eichhorn sought to unmoor the concept of scenes from geographical definitions of the local to trace how communication technologies have always connected members and audiences of scenes. However, it is important to note that Eichhorn emphasized that to participate in the activities of the New York scene, members had to physically live within its geographical boundaries. The ability of members to participate in a scene beyond its immediate geographical neighborhood has historically not always been possible.

Social media platforms have become the point through which members of the scene interact to inscribe their competing norms and practices. Social media here refers to networked digital environments, which enable users to create and share content or to participate in cultural activities. As with most contemporary cultural activities, materialities are shared between in-person and virtual environments. Gamemakers participate in local meetups situated in urban neighborhoods and virtual spaces to experience the activity of gamemaking. While the initial entry point to the scene is Toronto, gamemakers access information about the activities of their local communities through Facebook groups, following Twitter handles and Instagram accounts, and joining Slack and Discord channels. Social media is essential for any gamemaking organization to inform their members and to recruit potential participants for activities in the scene. In many ways, virtual locations both complement the scene's geographic locations and serve as additional entry points for aspiring or interested gamemakers to participate.

These online sites of inscription are also venues for other scenes where gamemakers participate in online game jams, such as Ludum Dare, and online workshops, such as Unity Technologies' live training. While these other scenes are not part of the Toronto scene, they highlight the ways in which activities typically associated with geographic locations, such as game jams and workshops, are appropriated by other organizations to draw global communities of gamemakers. Companies like Unity Technologies have been effective at tapping into these local scenes by providing free access to their developer tools and documentation.²⁶ This gift economy approach, where free labor is conducted by users in exchange for the use of otherwise inaccessible tools, resources, and opportunities, enables these companies to build a community of gamemakers around their tool, and to directly engage and influence the norms and practices of local scenes.²⁷

Social media has enabled forms of participation in scenes that were not possible in previous years and has shaped the scene in ways that were only emergent when this ethnography was conducted. As the scene extends its surface across geographic landscapes of urban life and online boundaries of digital environments, tracing its materialities of inscription reveal the constant struggles of appropriation and resistance between local and global stakeholders in Toronto and the global game industry. While this article discusses some activities of the Toronto scene and those who participate in it, it is also about the decline of a scene's ephemerality and its unique happenings, and the ways that online forms of inscription have created localized infrastructures within globalized networks tethered to industry products and interests.

Torontaru Monthly Social

The Get Well Bar is located near the intersection of Dundas Street West and Ossington Avenue in West Queen West. The space is approximately ten thousand square feet and has a bricolage aesthetic of reused furniture and ornaments, dispersed along white brick walls with vintage-styled oil paintings in gold-decorated frames. At the back of the bar are a dozen retro game cabinets with titles such as *Ms. Pacman*, *Donkey Kong Junior*, and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, to name but a few. This environment of vintage decor and retro game cabinets makes the bar a natural venue for gamemakers to meet socially for the monthly social event Torontaru.

The organizers of the event describe it as "a monthly meet-up with the simple aspirations of providing a place for friendly, game-inclined ladies and gents (whether you make 'em or you like 'em!) to chat and have a pint. No-fuss funtimes, every last Wednesday of the month!"²⁸ At any monthly meetup, Torontaru hosts approximately thirty to one hundred gamemakers, particularly aspiring gamemakers, who chat about their game projects over

pints. The event was initiated by a few prominent gamemakers in June 2013 who felt a social event for local gamemakers was necessary.²⁹ The event took inspiration from the Tokyo game production scene's Otaru Nomikai, which broadly translates to Otaru drinking party.³⁰ Organized by 8-4, a game localization company in Shibuya, Tokyo, Otaru began in 2003 as a weekly meetup every Thursday night for people interested in gamemaking.³¹ Held at the restaurant Taishuukappoutouhachi, gamemakers would sit, drink, and discuss their craft.

Torontaru bridges the essence of the Otaru meetup with the locality of Toronto—hence Torontaru. While gamemakers talk about their craft over pints at Torontaru, the event is also an unofficial networking event for gamemakers to recruit potential collaborators. During an interview, Margot describes a networking experience at Torontaru, which led to a potential collaboration on a gamemaking project:

Margot: Ah, I can't remember the guy's name, but I see him all the time. He's at Torontaru and he was an engineer at [game studio], and he hated his job and he quit and started a one-man show and put it in an iPhone app.

Interviewer: [Name]?

Margot: Yes! He wants to meet me on Saturday and have lunch with me because he needs someone to help him He's making a new app that he wants good assets for. I think he made a lot of the assets himself, but I think he wants to tow the waters with a partner, and I'd be cool with that.³²

Margot networked with a gamemaker that we had both met at Torontaru, hence my familiarity with his name when she described his background. It turned out this gamemaker required an artist to create all the assets for a mobile game he was designing and programming after he went independent following his departure from a prominent studio in Toronto. This aspect underlines how Torontaru is not just a social gathering for gamemakers to discuss their craft, but also a testing ground for gamemakers to network and find potential collaborators. While much of gamemaking revolves around computational and artistic forms of development, gamemakers require collaborators, playtesters, and venues to market and showcase their games.

As Torontaru is held at the bar Get Well, and is not hosted within a private space, anyone from the public can drink and socialize with the participants at Torontaru. Torontaru implemented a new safe spaces policy at the March 2015 social, where trusted volunteers wore Octopus buttons to address any concerns from attending gamemakers.³³ At the time, I was unaware of the motivations for the new safe spaces policy. It was only after I had a conversation with an acquaintance that I was directed to how an incident at the February 2015 social was documented on Twitter. The day after Torontaru was held on February 25, 2015, the Torontaru Twitter account released the following tweet: "Just a reminder that

Torontaru is an inclusive, no-nonsense drinking night for ****ALL**** video game humans. Harassment will not be tolerated.”³⁴ As I looked at other Twitter handles that engaged with the tweet from Torontaru, I was able to trace several tweets referring to the incidents at Torontaru on the night of February 25, 2015. One Twitter user stated that a man had claimed a friend was a “diversity hire,” and assumed that herself and a friend worked in “HR or something” and were not gamemakers.³⁵

Women have frequently been the target of in-person and virtual harassment and abuse as has been exemplified by public Twitter hashtags, like #1reasonwhy and #gamergate, and frequent news reports of toxic workplace cultures, including Ubisoft Toronto in 2020.³⁶ While the game industry is not unique to issues of gender discrimination in the workplace, the incident is consistent with scholarship that has demonstrated how women are widely perceived to be in marketing, human resources, and administrative roles and not the production roles of developer, artist, and engineer.³⁷ This perception of “legitimate work” in the game industry emphasizes not only how scenes are influenced by wider industry norms, but also how organizations like Torontaru resist and establish their own inclusive practices to address persistent inequalities.

Starting with the hypertext tweet of Torontaru’s safe spaces policy announcement, I was able to trace the hypotexts, tweets of the gamemakers who reported the incident which led to formation of the safe spaces policy. The replies, retweets, and interlinking conversations on Twitter demonstrates how tracing the scene as palimpsest can reveal the hypertextual discourse of movements within a scene. Many of these discourses are held in private conversation amongst organizers and groups within the scene which are not always accessible to researchers in understanding why specific policies and actions are undertaken. But as is increasingly becoming the case, gamemakers will make their values known publicly and call out misogyny, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination in their local place of the wider game industry.

Straw refers to the values which preside over specific cultural activities in scenes as *ethical worlds*.³⁸ Straw elaborates that these ethical worlds follow “the shaping of tastes, political identities, and protocols of behaviour which set the boundaries (however fragile) of a scene and serve as the basis for its self-perpetuation.”³⁹ In the Torontaru encounter, gamemakers resisted the wider cultural norms and working conditions of misogyny and sexual harassment of the game industry. The scene had its own expected behaviors for interactions between members, but as the incident highlights, these behaviors had to become inscribed and formalized into a safe spaces policy that defines harassment, how to report harassment, and the consequences for those perpetrating harassment. As such, Torontaru’s Twitter account became both a center for discourse around behavioral protocols at events and around the scene’s wider values and stance on misogyny and

harassment in the game industry. Though the incident exposes how the scene interacts with industry cultural norms and practices, the encounter underlines how Toronto explicitly inscribed publicly, and globally, that while these gender discrimination issues may be tolerated and allowed to proliferate in studios, publishers, and events around the globe, they have no place in the cultural activities of the Toronto scene.

TOJam Annual Game Jam

Game jams are a unique environment of the game industry: short and intense gamemaking events that typically take place over a weekend from anywhere between twenty-four and seventy-two hours. The term plays on *jam*, which refers to the practice of musicians improvising over a defined period of time to produce a music track, such as a song. Like the musicians, gamemakers create collaboratively within a short period of time. In the case of a game jam, gamemakers design and create a game, or at least a prototype of a game. The brevity and intensity of the game jam means that gamemakers must be efficient in their use of time and resources, and simple in designing the scope of their game.

Game jams are the defining feature of the Toronto scene. There are several annual game jams, including the Royal Ontario Museum Jam, Board Game Jam, and the Toronto Global Game Jam, as well as seasonal game jams arranged by organizations like Dames Making Games. But, it was the Toronto Game Jam, commonly referred as TOJam (pronounced “toe-jam”) that held the first game jam in Toronto. In 2006, the founders of TOJam, Nelson Yu, Jim McGinley, and Emily McGinley, along with other gamemakers in Toronto, discussed the idea of hosting a game jam at their International Game Developer Association (IGDA) Toronto Chapter meetings.⁴⁰ The IGDA Toronto Chapter was founded in 2000 and held monthly meetings where developers would socialize and talk about gamemaking. Many of these gamemakers did not work for game companies, and a game jam was perceived as their only entry into making a game; especially when there were only a handful of game studios in Toronto at that time, such as Pseudo Interactive and Groove Games, which closed in 2008 and 2010 respectively.

The first TOJam was hosted over a weekend from May 5–7, 2006 with thirty-five participants, and produced ten completed games and seven “valiant attempts,” or unfinished games.⁴¹ Since then, TOJam has been held annually over a weekend at the end of April or the beginning of May. Over the years, TOJam has expanded, moving to larger venues and drawing gamemakers from around Toronto and the globe. TOJam moved to George Brown College’s (GBC) School of Design in 2011 for TOJam 6 “Sixty Times” at 230 Richmond Street East, before settling at 341 King Street East where the School of Design’s Game Development Program is located for TOJam 7 “The Sevens” in 2012. During my

ethnography, I attended TOJam 10 "Tentacular" and 11 "bELEVEN" in 2015 and 2016 respectively, where there were over 450 participants stretched out over dozens of rooms on the fifth and sixth floors of the building. Rooms are packed with roughly twenty to thirty "jammers," who have access to iMac computers ordinarily used by GBC students. Jammers typically worked on their game projects from late morning until the early hours of the next morning. Sometimes jammers slept on the floor by their computers or pulled an all-nighter to finish their games before the Sunday deadline at 5:00 p.m. Once their games are complete, they upload them onto the online distribution platform, itch.io, under the TOJam game jam event, so users of the website and organizers of TOJam can find and play the completed games.

Social media was a dominant feature of TOJam 10 and 11, especially Twitter. Primarily using the hashtag #TOJam, gamemakers tweeted frequently about both their TOJam and gamemaking experiences. Jammers provided frequent updates on their games-in-progress by providing screen captures of GIF images of their games, such as game menus, art assets, 3D models, and in-engine game captures. Once the game jam was over, these jammers posted itch.io links to their uploaded games. Jammers also followed the #TOJam hashtag throughout the game jam, replying and commenting on each other's games-in-progress and the various happenings throughout the jam, such as when food was ready to be eaten.⁴² While Twitter does not replace the actual experience of attending and participating in a game jam, it does provide a timeline of the game jam, documentation of how jammers develop their games, and a window into their gamemaking experiences.

While many of the happenings and discussions at game jams are hidden away behind closed doors, in many ways, one need only tune-in via Twitch and Twitter to see a timeline of how gamemakers develop their games and gauge the experiences of gamemaking before a game is published to itch.io. More importantly though, the hypertextuality of the scene reveals how gamemakers make do with global tools to make and distribute their games. Screenshots of works-in-progress and published games on itch.io reveal a disposition to use industry-made tools in the production of TOJam games. The splash logo at the launch of each game on itch.io shows a variety of tools including Unity, Gamemaker, and Construct. But we also see the inscription of local norms and practices with the TOJam logo of a goat on a pole incorporated into the artwork, narrative, or game mechanics of each game. In this sense, the games produced during the game jam reveal in their textuality the interactions and tensions between the Toronto scene and the global industry tools.

Straw refers to these aspects of scenes as *spaces of assembly* where participants of the scene "perform the often invisible labour of pulling together cultural phenomena in ways which heighten their visibility and facilitate their circulation to other places."⁴³ In this case,

TOJam brings together the wider practices of gamemaking into a twenty-four- to seventy-two-hour window to demonstrate the cultural production of games in Toronto. Simultaneously though, the use of Twitch and Twitter by TOJam and its participants broadcasts the scene's cultural activity of producing games to both the local game production community and the wider global game industry. This is demonstrated by the use of the #TOJam hashtag alongside the global #indiegame and #gamedev hashtags to circulate these games-in-progress to other gamemakers and potential player audiences. The juxtaposition of the local scene to the global scene of game production is what Genette refers to as architextuality: "it involves a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention."⁴⁴ As such, the scene as a space of assembly to demonstrate the production of games in Toronto is paratextually linked to wider texts and discourses engaged by global audiences of gamemakers and players.

Though not frequent, some jammers would tweet about their late nights working on their games and waking up early the next morning.⁴⁵ While not representative of all gamemakers' game jam experiences, including my own, this practice represents the poor working conditions some gamemakers are willing to endure to complete a game in a weekend. For several decades, the game industry has been rife with what is colloquially referred to as "crunch," an extended period of time where gamemakers, typically working for established studios and publishers, consistently perform extended periods of overtime, sometimes for months on end in one hundred-hour workweeks.⁴⁶ While typically enforced by employers, I found gamemakers at game jams would perform a similar version of self-exploitation to complete their game in twenty-four to seventy-two hours.

Straw refers to these kinds of practices as *spaces of mediation*: "documents produced in moments of hidden labor circulate, often without attribution, as the tokens of scenic activity."⁴⁷ While gamemakers themselves disseminate these tweets about their activities at TOJam, these cultural activities are often made invisible through the absence of documentation. The replication of crunch, to overwork hours on end within an arbitrary timeline, is indicative of a cultural norm that has become commonplace across all sites and contexts of game production. Whereas Straw was referring to circulated documents like games and other media, what we see through the use of social media in the scene is a textual commentary on the invisible labor that went into the production of a TOJam game. With each tweet circulated during the game jam, we see how the industry norm of crunch is imitated hour-by-hour, day-after-day as gamemakers replicate crunch to produce their final game. Using the notion of scenes as palimpsests I was able to trace all the hypotexts of tweets from gamemakers that documented the labor that went into their hypertext—the TOJam game. Further, by analyzing the #TOJam hashtag, I was able to trace how wider discourses of crunch and precarious working conditions in the game industry are replicated by gamemakers in the scene. In contrast to the previous example on the safe spaces policy

at Torontaru, we don't see a resistance to the wider norms and practices of the industry, but a replication through self-exploitation from the gamemakers themselves.

Toronto Unity Developers Meetup

The Unity Editor by Unity Technologies has become a prominent tool of game production in recent years and part of its success in becoming a default tool-of-choice has been the company's strategy of promoting the game editor through a variety of activities in local scenes, like Toronto.⁴⁸ Some of the predominantly used game editors and tools in the global game industry include the Unity Editor, Unreal Engine 4, GameMaker Studio, Construct 2, Twine, and Pico 8. Game editors are software tools, which streamline the creation of games through drag-and-drop processes, thus requiring minimal coding and technical knowledge. Many of these editors are accompanied by plugins, prefabricated assets, and programs that simplify the gamemaking process. In many cases, they are accompanied by online manuals, wikis, walkthrough videos, and specific genre tutorials that enable gamemakers to learn how to make specific types of games.⁴⁹

In its virtual spaces, these game editors have thousands of participants, many of whom are also members of the Toronto scene. However, for these game editors to be considered a genre of cultural production in the Toronto scene, there needs to be a forum through which local gamemakers connect to one another. During my ethnography, only two game editors had local communities in the scene: the Unity Editor and Unreal Engine 4. The latter game editor community only emerged at the end of my study. Both Unity and Unreal Engine 4 have extensive virtual communities, which connect thousands of gamemakers around the globe, but they also have Meetup groups that represent local, geographic chapters of the game editors.

Meetup is a social media site that connects people around a shared cultural activity—such as a software application—which facilitates the creation and development of geographic scenes. Founded in 2002, Meetup is a way for organizers to manage in-person meetings and for individuals to find groups that suit their interests. Meetup typically localizes members around urban, geographical areas. It achieves this by geolocation of members' postal codes. In the case of the Toronto scene, members will usually enter a postal code beginning with M5S, but Meetup groups can be located if a user is aware of a Meetup group's name, or localized cultural activities, such as "Unity," "Video Game Development," and "Toronto."

Unity was the first game editor to have a Meetup organized for the purposes of connecting gamemakers in Toronto. Named "Toronto Unity Developers," the meetup describes itself as "a group for Toronto based developers interested in the Unity game engine. Developers,

artists and designers of all skill levels are welcome. Learn from professionals and be inspired by independent game developers.”⁵⁰ Founded in August 2013, the group held its first meetup on September 12, 2013 at the independent mobile game studio, Uken Games. Founded in 2009, Uken Games has developed fourteen commercially released mobile games for iOS, Android, BlackBerry, Windows Phone, and Facebook, and has approximately fifty employees. Uken, along with the company Unity Technologies, is also a cosponsor of the meetup. Uken and Unity’s investment in the meetup provides publicity for Uken, as a facilitator of the scene, and an opportunity for Unity to expand its reach into the Toronto scene.

Although Uken does not explicitly state in press releases that it develops mobile games with Unity, job postings at the studio frequently include the phrase: “expertise with the Unity game engine.”⁵¹ It is also unlikely Uken would host a Unity meetup if the company was not already using the tool to build mobile games. Events such as these are ways for the studio to meet other talented gamemakers with expertise in Unity for possible recruitment. On several occasions, the organizers announced job postings for positions at Uken and other local studios looking for trained Unity gamemakers. The discussion board on the Meetup group site also frequently included job postings for Unity-based projects.

By the end of my ethnography, the meetup claimed 1,425 online members, though anywhere from fifty to one hundred participants attended any given event. The meetup itself was held infrequently over the year, varying between a month to several months apart. This was likely due to the co-organizers’ availability to coordinate the event and invite guest speakers. As almost all game studios go through periods of “crunch”⁵²—the overload of working hours that limits sleep, negatively affects health, and distorts a work life balance—it is also possible that the organizers only held meetups when they were not busy working towards a deadline. The format for the meetup typically involved an introduction by one of the co-organizers, followed by several presentations from guest speakers, and a post-talk social where gamemakers had the opportunity to show off their Unity-made games-in-progress. The latter part of this event was particularly interesting, especially if it fell shortly after a game jam where many attendees would have just made a game with the Unity Editor.

During the July 28, 2016 meetup, the organizers announced there was now a Slack channel for Unity users, which would include gamemakers from across the globe. Within this Slack channel were sub-channels on various topics and local chapters, such as the Toronto Unity Developers meetup. The Toronto chapter of the Unity Slack channel included thirty-six members by the end of my ethnography. Though the group was relatively new, discussions on the channel resembled those of the meetup with job postings, event announcements, and the promotion of recently released games developed in Unity. However, the group also

included technical discussions around the functionality and affordances of Unity where gamemakers posted screenshots of their games-in-development. One of the first substantial posts in the group, beyond the initial "Hello" messages, was a programming issue that a gamemaker had run into. A short discussion quickly developed around the issue, like that of a public forum on Unity's community website. Other gamemakers on the sub-channel quickly responded, and the issue was resolved following a few screenshots back-and-forth addressing the problem at-hand. The integration of Slack around Unity is an interesting development for the meetup, as it emphasizes how Unity has been adept at connecting gamemakers within localized scenes to the tools and resources around their global community.

Straw refers to these aspects of scenes as *collectivities* marked by some form of proximity.⁵³ Proximity can apply to just about every cultural activity in a scene that requires members to interact and participate. However, the activities of the Toronto Unity Developers reveal a specific genre of proximity that brings the scene alongside a global community of Unity gamemakers. Members within this group had the advantage of connecting in person with other Unity gamemakers in the scene, while also benefiting from the global community of Unity gamemakers facilitated by the company Unity Technologies. This example demonstrates how the game industry will tether local game production scenes to its products to accumulate potential users via in-person meetups and retain current users via localized support and community building on social media platforms, like Slack.⁵⁴ This two-pronged approach underlines how game industry companies like Unity Technologies recognize the value of local game production scenes and ensure they will continue to be tethered to their product into the future. Though Unity was not the first nor the simplest tool for gamemakers to access and use, Unity has been the most effective at developing a genre of cultural production within the scene and beyond.

The defining feature of any gamemaking scene is its ability to make games, and the Toronto scene is very effective at providing gamemakers with the space and resources to do so. Companies like Unity have become extremely effective at enticing gamemakers to use their editor by providing free training workshops and resources to make Unity games in the Toronto scene.⁵⁵ As other companies catch on to this trend, there will be more and more gamemaking scenes tethered to game production tools. This trend becomes increasingly important for gamemakers as they not only navigate the benefits and drawbacks of using a game editor and participate in its respective community, but also traverse the end-user license agreements and restrictions placed on using these digital tools in a society that increasingly promotes the creation and distribution of media within creative economies. And as these companies begin to control the way games are produced and disseminated, local not-for-profit organizations will have to develop new ways to resist the adoption of industry cultural norms and practices in how games are made.

Conclusion

For cultural studies, examining scenes as palimpsests provides the framework for analyzing the cultural production of media by tracing the hypotexts of hypertexts and the paratexts that connect them together. As was demonstrated, the architextuality of hashtags, links, retweets, replies, and threads on social media like Twitter and Slack enable us to trace and understand how documents and discourses emerge in the scene. Many of these documents come to embody the behavioral protocols and actions of scene members, while others demonstrate the production of games from its cultural activities, like game jams. Ethnographers of scenes rely heavily on interviews, observations, and copies of ephemeral documents to piece together the locations, cultural activities, and genres of production within a scene. Other researchers examining historical scenes rely on private archives and oral histories to piece together these important accounts in understanding the development of infrastructure and culture in urban environments.

In this article, I have demonstrated how the textuality of social media can be used as a method to trace the histories of scenes and to contextualize broader linkages between geographic localities and globalized industries, movements, and genres. By focusing on the hypertextuality of scenes and how its participants inscribe their norms and practices via social media like Twitter and Slack, we can see how members discover and discuss the activities of the scene. In current scenes, like the Toronto game production scene, the embeddedness of social media and other forms of virtual interaction have enabled scenes to simultaneously broaden out their memberships by signposting its activities on the internet while also creating memberships gated behind Slack and Discord channels. This shift to the virtual materialities of scenes has given researchers the opportunity to triangulate and tabulate members and participants of activities, contextualize simultaneous events within the scene as was the case with the Torontaru incident, and to also capture the documentation of knowledge as can be found in the Slack channels and developer forums supporting local game production.

More importantly, the notion of looking at scenes as palimpsests helps us examine many of the tensions of scenes. In the case of the Toronto Unity Developer meetup, we see the corporatization of grassroots cultures. In other examples from my ethnography, organizations like the Hand Eye Society, Bento Miso, and Dames Making Games offer workshops and talks from representatives at Autodesk and Yoyo Games, the developers of the 3D modeling software Maya and the GameMaker engine, which highlights how several industry companies find ways to tether themselves to the local scene. We also see the blending of local norms with global industry practices, as found in the case of TOJam with the performance of crunch-like working conditions and games published on game distribution platforms like itch.io. One wonders how many of these small, first drafts of

games have gone on to be published on larger commercial platforms, like Valve Corporation's Steam, with the TOJam logo of a goat-on-a-pole incorporated into the artwork or play mechanics of the game.

Looking at scenes as palimpsests reveals how local politics of the scene can spill over onto social media, documenting many of the same issues of "ludopolitics" we see across the wider game industry.⁵⁶ Though the scene still relies upon word-of-mouth for gamemakers to know about the various gamemaking happenings, events, and activities, it has become increasingly virtual, not just as a place for information to be posted, but as a space where conversations about gamemaking and the production of games are debated and legitimized. Together, these tensions only emerge as the scene increasingly becomes material and tethered to wider industry norms and practices, underlining some of the ways through which local game production interacts with the wider game industry.

And finally, examining scenes as palimpsests alters how we perceive and define local cultural production. Notions of the local have typically been conceived along axis of scale and space, limiting our frameworks to geographical notions of size and physical place. This dichotomous framework situates the local as a small, urban environment or national industry, against a large, networked global industry. Arjun Appadurai's emphasis on the relational and contextual, constituted by a community's sense of social immediacy, technologies of interaction, and relativity of contexts, suggests a way forward. This does not mean that geographical definitions should be abandoned in conceiving the local scene. Rather, we untether our perception that networked communication technologies are exclusively global. David Nieborg, Chris J. Young, and Daniel Joseph examined how, out of the top 100 mobile games in the Apple App Store, the Silicon Valley region in California was responsible for producing 49 games in 2015, 36 in 2016, and 25 in 2017.⁵⁷ As the top 100 mobile games on the App Store account for approximately eighty-five percent of total direct revenue, the Silicon Valley region can be viewed as a key center and influencer of the global game industry. From this perspective, the global game industry is largely the local cultural production of a few geographical places or scenes. As such, the global is merely the sum of its localities, defined by how gamemakers and communities within local scenes inscribe its cultural norms and practices upon the wider scene and extended global industry via virtual technologies of interactivity. Taken further, scene tracing the hypertextuality of participants and cultural activities reveals how some localities replicate global movements, genres, and industry, and how others resist and transform to define their own norms and practices in the cultural production of global media.

Notes

1. Will Straw, "Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music," *Cultural Studies* 5, no. 3 (1991): 368–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502389100490311> <

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2. See for instance the special issue in *Cultural Studies* on "Scene Thinking." Benjamin Woo, Stuart Poyntz, Jamie Rennie, "Scene Thinking: Introduction," *Cultural Studies* 29, no. 3 (2015): 285–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.937950> < <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.937950>> . ↵
 3. Happenings are unplanned, improvised, and nonlinear social events. Typical examples of happenings are block parties and street raves that develop organically. In the context of gamemaking, happenings typically occur as spillover activities following an organized event, such as a group of gamemakers organizing to socialize at a bar nearby. During my fieldwork I attended many happenings that followed the end of a game jam or a festival. ↵
 4. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). ↵
 5. The data presented in this article and sections of the writing are taken from my unpublished dissertation on gamemakers in the game production scene in Toronto. Some sections of this article will be similar to sections found in the dissertation, in particular Chapter 3, subtitled "Design: Scenes," 67–108. Chris J. Young, "Game Changers: Everyday Gamemakers and the Development of the Video Game Industry" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2018), <https://hdl.handle.net/1807/89734> < <https://hdl.handle.net/1807/89734>> . ↵
 6. Will Straw, "Cultural Scenes," *Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure* 27, no. 2 (2004): 411–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.2004.10707657> < <https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.2004.10707657>> . ↵
 7. Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1997). ↵
 8. Will Straw, "Some Things A Scene Might Be," *Cultural Studies* 29, no 3 (2015): 476–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.937947> < <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.937947>> . ↵
 9. There has been some research on the Canadian context of game production. See for instance Daniel J. Joseph, "The Toronto Indies: Some Assemblage Required," *Loading . . .* 7, no. 11 (2013): 92–105, <https://journals.sfu.ca/loading/index.php/loading/article/view/123/154> < <https://journals.sfu.ca/loading/index.php/loading/article/view/123/154>> . Felan Parker and Jennifer Jenson, "Canadian Indie Games Between the Global and the Local," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 42, no. 5 (2017): 867–91, <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2017v4n5a3229> < <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2017v4n5a3229>> . David B. Nieborg, Chris J. Young, Daniel J. Joseph, "Lost in the App Store: The Political Economy of the Canadian Game App Economy," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 44 (2019): 57–62, <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2019v44n2a3505> < <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2019v44n2a3505>> . ↵
 10. All participants in my ethnography are anonymized and referred to by pseudonyms. ↵
 11. Daniel J. Joseph, "Digital Games: A Canary in the Coal Mine of Capital," *LeftStreamed*, March 10, 2019, <https://socialistproject.ca/leftstreamed-video/digital-games-canary-in-coalmine> < <https://socialistproject.ca/leftstreamed-video/digital-games-canary-in-coalmine/>> . ↵
 12. The concepts of technical infrastructures, business models, and governance structures are drawn from David B. Nieborg and Thomas Poell's analysis of platformization of cultural production. Thomas Poell, David B. Nieborg, "The Platformization of Cultural Production: Theorizing the Contingent Cultural Comodity," *New Media & Society* 20, no. 11 (2018): 4275–92, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1461444818769694> < <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1461444818769694>> . ↵

13. Stephen Kline, Nick Dyer-Witheford, and Greig de Peuter, *Digital Play: The Interaction of Technology, Culture, and Marketing* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003). ↵
14. Kline et al., *Digital Play*, 220. ↵
15. See for instance Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter, "'EA Spouse' and the Crisis of Video Game Labour: Enjoyment, Exclusion, Exploitation, Exodus," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31 (2006): 599–617, <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2006v31n3a1771> < <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2006v31n3a1771>> . Amanda C. Cote and Brandon C. Harris, "The Cruel Optimism of 'Good Crunch': How Game Industry Discourses Perpetuate Unsustainable Labor Practices," *New Media & Society* (2021): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F14614448211014213> < <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F14614448211014213>> . Kelly Bergstrom, "When a Door Becomes a Window: Using Glassdoor to Examine Game Industry Work Cultures," *Information, Communication & Society* 25, no. 6 (2022): 835–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2022.2048048> < <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2022.2048048>> . ↵
16. The thematic areas I adapt are taken from Greig de Peuter and Chris J. Young's special issue in *Television & New Media* on "Contested Formations of Digital Game Labor." Please consult their article for a more detailed literature review of the recent contributions in these thematic areas. Greig de Peuter and Chris J. Young, "Contested Formations of Digital Game Labor," *Television & New Media* 20, no. 8 (2019): 747–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1527476419851089> < <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1527476419851089>> . ↵
17. Straw, "Cultural Scenes," 412. ↵
18. Straw, "Cultural Scenes," 412. ↵
19. Straw, "Cultural Scenes," 416. ↵
20. Straw, "Cultural Scenes," 416. ↵
21. Grimes, "Little Big Scene." Brendan Keogh, "The Melbourne Indie Game Scenes: Value Regimes in Localized Game Development," in *Independent Videogames: Cultures, Networks, Techniques and Politics*, ed. Paolo Ruffino (New York: Routledge, 2020), 209–22. Kruse, "Local Identity and Independent Music Scenes, Online and Off." ↵
22. See for instance Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006). ↵
23. Jonathan Zittrain, *The Future of the Internet: And How to Stop It* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008). Grimes, "Little Big Scene." ↵
24. Kate Eichhorn, "Copy Machines and Downtown Scenes: Deterritorializing Urban Culture in a Pre-Digital Era," *Cultural Studies* 29, no 3 (2015): 363–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.937940> < <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.937940>> . ↵
25. Eichhorn, "Copy Machines," 366. ↵
26. Chris J. Young, "Unity Production: Capturing the Everyday Game Maker Market," in *Game Production Studies*, ed. Olli Sotamaa and Jan Švelch (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2021), 141–58. ↵
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28. Torontaru, "Torontaru," accessed April 2, 2017, <http://torontaru.com> < <http://torontaru.com/>> . ↵
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30. BlogTO, "Torontaru July." ↵

31. Otaru, "About," accessed August 22, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/otarunomikai/about> < <https://www.facebook.com/otarunomikai/about/>> . Game localization is the process of translating a game into other languages, so it can be published and disseminated in markets outside the original country. In the case of 8-4 studio, the company translates Japanese games into English for the games to be released in English speaking countries. ↵
32. Margot, Interview 4, 2015. ↵
33. Torontaru, "Safe Spaces Policy," March 19, 2015, <http://torontaru.com/safe-space.html> < <http://torontaru.com/safe-space.html>> . ↵
34. Torontaru (@Torontaru), "Just a reminder that Torontaru is an inclusive, no-nonsense drinking night for **ALL** video game humans. Harassment will not be tolerated," Twitter, February 26, 2015, 5:16 p.m., <https://twitter.com/torontaru/status/571071361919164416> < <https://twitter.com/torontaru/status/571071361919164416>> . ↵
35. Tweets have been anonymized to protect the identity of the author. ↵
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37. See for instance Mia Consalvo, "Crunched by Passion: Women Game Developers and Workplace Challenges," in *Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat: New Perspectives on Gender and Gaming*, ed. Yasmin B. Kafai, Carrie Heeter, Jill Denner, and Jennifer Y. Sun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 177–91; Alison Harvey and Stephanie Fisher, "Everyone Can Make Games! The Post-Feminist Context of Women in Digital Game Production," *Feminist Media Studies* 15, no. 4 (2015): 576–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2014.958867> < <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2014.958867>> ; and Suzanne de Castell and Karen Skardzius, "Speaking in Public: What Women Say about Working in the Video Game Industry," *Television & New Media* 20, no. 8 (2019): 836–47, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1527476419851078> < <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1527476419851078>> . ↵
38. Straw, "Some Things A Scene Might Be," 480–1. ↵
39. Straw, "Some Things A Scene Might Be," 480. ↵
40. The following description of the founding of TOJam is based on conversations with founders and participants of TOJam that I documented in field notes. ↵
41. TOJam, "TOJam #1 May 5–7 2006," accessed August 22, 2017, <http://www.tojam.ca/history/2006.asp> < <http://www.tojam.ca/history/2006.asp>> . ↵
42. Each year, the organizers of TOJam get sponsors for the game jam so jammers can get free meals throughout the day. Pizza and Chinese cuisine were frequent options for attendees. ↵
43. Straw, "Some Things A Scene Might Be," 478. ↵
44. Genette, *Palimpsests*, 4. ↵
45. Tweets have been anonymized to protect the identity of the authors. The @torontogamejam Twitter account for TOJam and the #tojam hashtag were the social media places I used to analyze the TOJam game jams. ↵
46. See for instance Amanda C. Cote and Brandon C. Harris, "The Cruel Optimism of 'Good Crunch.'" ↵
47. Straw, "Some Things A Scene Might Be," 483. ↵
48. Chris J. Young, "Unity Production." ↵
49. Unity Technologies has its online learning platform for the Unity Editor for gamemakers to learn the editor while they make games. The tutorials provided include some essential tutorials and overviews of the interface and its functionalities, but it also provides specific learning packages

with asset kits so gamemakers can create specific genres of games without having to produce all the scripts and assets themselves. For example, gamemakers can download the Creator Kit: RPG to create the basic game functionality of a role-playing game within a couple of hours using the Unity Learn project tutorial, <https://learn.unity.com/project/creator-kit-rpg> < <https://learn.unity.com/project/creator-kit-rpg>> . ↩

50. Toronto Unity Developers, "Toronto Unity Developers," accessed April 2, 2017, <https://www.meetup.com/Toronto-Unity-Developers> < <https://www.meetup.com/Toronto-Unity-Developers/>> . ↩
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52. Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter, "'EA Spouse' and the Crisis of Video Game Labour". ↩
53. Straw, "Some Things A Scene Might Be," 477–8. ↩
54. See Jonathan Zittrain's *The Future of the Internet* and Sara Grime's "Little Big Scene" for other examples on how company's tether their services to everyday cultural activities. ↩
55. Chris J. Young, "Unity Production." ↩
56. Ergin Bulut, *A Precarious Game: The Illusion of Dream Jobs in the Video Game Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020). ↩
57. David B. Nieborg, Chris J. Young, and Daniel Joseph, "App Imperialism: The Political Economy of the Canadian App Store," *Social Media + Society* (2020): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2056305120933293> < <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2056305120933293>> . ↩

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